

International Youth Rally “Let Us Get Rid of Nuclear Weapons 2007” in Nagasaki (August 7)



Presentations by Youth Representatives from around the World:

Magali Bonnet French Peace Movement

Let Us Get Rid of Nuclear Weapons

Dear friends,

I have been active for a year within the Students' Committee of French Peace Movement in the Aix-en-Provence University. The Committee is made up exclusively of young people. Its creation goes back to about two years ago. A series of meetings, especially the one with Mrs. Minetti, President of Department Council of French Peace Movement, convinced these students of the need to support the association.

We are trying to have one or two meetings a month between activists and other students in the faculty. We are trying to answer some basic questions: why we, students, support this association. What values do we defend? What impact does this commitment have on our daily lives? These gatherings also provide opportunities to think about our means of action. We want to reach a wide public. It is therefore essential to diversify our actions.

In November 2006, we had the privilege to welcome Mr. Joseph Gerson, program director of

American Friends Service Committee in a conference held at our University, moderated by Pierre Villard, co-president of French Peace Movement. This conference whose theme was nuclear disarmament was very rich and motivated us for organizing other actions.

Nuclear disarmament is an important subject, but we are sensitive to other global conflicts. Thus, we want to mobilize on key dates to appeal to the public: September 21st, World Peace Day, March 3rd International Women's Day are the dates when we want to show our presence in the faculty. The means are many: exhibition, theater etc... These are our plans for the year ahead.

I would like to remind you that our Committee has not been officialized yet. It relies entirely on the regional structure that supports and helps us since the beginning. Of course, we plan to officialize our Committee.

At regional level, French Peace Movement takes part in youth forums. For two years, the Association participates in a high school students rally "Spring in High School". Young and adults from many Mediterranean countries get together to relax. A project called "Peace Foundation" was proposed adapting a similar German initiative. German pacifists imagined a wall made up of small wood bricks. Each brick carries a peace message. This year, at "Spring in High School", 2000 messages were left on the bricks. The wall that will be 20 meters long will be built on

September 21.

Last year, during the same event, French Peace Movement had proposed a project "A Hand for Peace". Each one leaves his/her handprint on a banner. The Association won a prize for the project. The banners are then brought together to link Hiroshima to Nagasaki.

At national level, French Peace Movement is trying to organize meetings of young pacifists. It will be the opportunity for young people with different backgrounds to meet, to learn to get acquainted and especially to overcome conflicts that oppose their people. Thus, in 2002, young Palestinians and Israelis could meet together and try to overcome the conflict opposing the two peoples. French Peace Movement offered its good offices to these two groups. An international meeting is planned for July 2008. It may be held near Ile Longue, a base for French nuclear submarines. In this way, we could organize a citizens' inspection. French Peace Movement wants to bring together the young people to awaken their consciousness.

Peace in the world must be a concern to everyone. Every day, on day-to-day basis, we must try to remain committed to values such as tolerance and solidarity so that peace will not be a mere word anymore. Thank you.

Erin Placey
American Friends Service Committee
USA

Greetings, my name is Erin Placey and I am speaking today both as a 23-year old delegate from the United States and also as a representative of the New Hampshire office of the American Friends Service Committee.

First of all I would like to begin by thanking all of you. It is truly an honor, a privilege, and a very humbling experience to speak to a group of people so committed to bringing about peace through nuclear abolition.

In these next few minutes I would like to share a little about myself, about the growing youth movement in the United States for nuclear abolition, and also the exciting work both youth and adults are doing in New Hampshire to ensure that nuclear disarmament is on the minds of all 2008 Presidential candidates.

I want to begin with a little background information about myself. I am a very new addition to the campaign for nuclear abolition and my journey to join this movement has been somewhat unique. Growing up, my mother worked for the United States Government in the Department of Defense, and more specifically at a Naval Shipyard which docks, services, and launches Trident nuclear capable submarines. In

our home there are pictures of me, a smiling child, touring the many nuclear submarines that were docked on the base. My mom is not a bad person, in fact she is wonderful, but her efforts to provide for her family were cruelly manipulated and exploited by a government claiming to build and deploy weapons of mass destruction in order to promote peace and democracy around the world.

Due to these facts, what I knew was that my mom's job put food on the table, clothes on my back, and paid for my college education, but nuclear weapons and their capability for absolute destruction never entered my consciousness. The thought and threat of a nuclear world was too abstract, and too far removed from my rural hometown of southern Maine to symbolize any danger to me, my family, or anyone I loved.

I was in sixteen years old when first I realized the terrifying effects of a nuclear reality. In my tenth grade history class, while studying World War II, each of us took on the role of President Harry Truman. We were assigned to research and justify or condemn the droppings of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Then, still in character, decide if we would have authorized the nuclear destruction of Japan. Of the twenty-five students in my class, I stood alone in my decision not to use nuclear force. I couldn't verbalize it then, but I now recognize my profound sadness at my classmates repetition of history's most horrendous act of terrorism, reflected my understanding that the students were approaching the 'solution' from a paradigm of empire. At sixteen years old they already possessed a feeling of entitlement and were so blinded to the global repercussions of maintaining the United States empire that it seemed perfectly natural to justify enjoying 'peace' and security at home, while our government inflicted incredible brutality and suffering abroad.

Although many in the United States still remain blind to the importance of total nuclear disarmament, and such pertinent issues must compete for the attention of America's youth with the latest videogame, cinema blockbuster, and reality television show, there is a small but growing revival of the No Nukes movement among youth. A perfect example of this is the "Think Outside the Bomb Conference", sponsored by the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. TOTB is a youth oriented anti-nuclear conference whose purpose is two-fold. Not only does Think Outside the Bomb teach youth the dangers associated with nuclear weapons, nuclear power, and imperialism, but also challenges the youth to bring together their collective experiences and dialogue, brainstorm, and plan new ways that youth can counteract these current realities.

Lastly, I would like to mention the incredible work that is happening in the state of New

Hampshire. For those of you familiar with the political process of the United States, New Hampshire is incredibly important because it is the site of the first Presidential Primary in the United States. For this reason, our state with a modest population of 1.3 million has been visited 404 times by presidential hopefuls since January 2007. That equates to an average of 57.7 visits per month, 14.4 visits per week and an astonishing 2+ visits per day.

In light of this incredible amount of 'face time' New Hampshire residents have been given with potential political leaders, all vying for their vote, residents have the unique opportunity to literally shape the political agenda. Not only to listen to what candidates have to say about their own policies but also for residents to tell their future leaders what they want – and the candidate will listen!

In the fall I will begin a position designed to organize and mobilize volunteers to attend Presidential candidate events and ask them specific, action based, commitment oriented, questions regarding their intentions to adhere to Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, urging them to vote against the Reliable Replacement Warhead bill, along with various other nuclear issues. The answers to these questions are then posted on blogs, websites, and advertised to the media in order to help publicize the candidate's positions and encourage them to adhere to the current attitude of the voting public.

My English teacher in high school told me never to end a paper with a quote but I am ignoring that as I wish to share my current inspiration from the book *Hold Hope, Wage Peace*. Howard Zinn, a celebrated scholar in the United States writes words of encouragement to those in the struggle for peace social justice.

"What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places – and there are so many – where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however small a way, we do not have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance to all that is bad around us, is in itself a marvelous victory." Thank you!

Shen Fang Chinese People's Association for Peace and Disarmament

Safeguarding Peace and Development -- Unshirkable Responsibility of the Youth

Dear friends, ladies and gentlemen,

I want to start my newly re-wrote speech with special experience in Hiroshima. In the evening of August 3, when an aged Japanese friend guided us to walk on a road in Hiroshima which he deliberately led us to and pointed out that 62 years ago, the US atomic bomb exploded near the road, and all the local citizens died in the catastrophe. Some survivors far away from the explosion site were also severely burned. It is my very first time to feel the tragic history in the exploded venue by myself. I was deeply shocked again and more sympathetic to Japanese friends, meanwhile understood that how Japanese people were hurt by the tragedy and thought a lot at that night.

Obviously, we are gathering here today to commemorate the historical sadness for peace. To commemorate history is to make the history as a mirror and never let it occur again. However, let's take a look around the world, the U.S. is expanding its military deployment throughout the whole world and especially, deploying the Missile Defense System in Poland and Czech, Russia has succeeded in testing the offensive missile which can "penetrate any defense system", the UK intended to renew its Trident system, Iran sticks to developing its nuclear program, etc. The whole world is not yet in tranquility and peace. Fortunately, the Six-Party Talks have made a breakthrough recently, the DPRK had agreed to shut down the nuclear facilities in Yongbyon. Undoubtedly, it is good news to the Northeast Asia. This achievement is also the compelling evidence to prove that China as always pays great efforts to maintain peace and stability in the region and the world at large.

But the point is that what we young generation can do for peace and development? What can we learn from the historical lessons? The answer is we should dare to shoulder the responsibility for safeguarding peace and development in the region and the whole world because the future belongs to us. We have to send out our voice of longing for peace internationally, we have to express our own opinions about peace and development at the world stage, we have to unite to fight for our future of peace and prosperity. Undeniably, the young people presenting here will be the master of our own countries sooner or later. If we can be aware of the responsibility which is unshirkable for us to shoulder, then we have taken a very important step. Then, this youth rally is the second step in this regard. I believe that if we are willing to do

something, we should meet and know each other first, and then to discuss the way out. But how much do we know about each other? Probably, you know I am Chinese, I know you are Japanese, he is American, but do we really know each other? Despite it is a global village, but after all, the globe is a vast world. We may know something about each other through television, newspaper or internet, but there are much floating in depth. Giving an example about myself, before my first visit to Japan, frankly speaking, in my mind Japanese people is very bad because Japan invaded China but denied the history of invasion, committed the Nanjing massacre but some said it doesn't exist. So logically, I think Japanese people must be bad and cruel. But after the visit, I found myself wrong. In Japan, I walked in the clean street, breathed pure and fresh air, met the friendly people and witnessed the modern civilization. Especially, I surprisingly found that actually, there are so many Japanese people who are able to objectively recognize that period of history, and there are a large number of people who are devoted themselves to the peace movement. I told myself that Chinese and Japanese must be good neighborly friends, and China should learn from Japan. Therefore, I am so lucky that I have made many Japanese friends. I sincerely hope that all of us will become friends, hereby I personally send my friendly invitation to all of you to visit China at your convenience. In China, I am convinced that you will also meet the friendly Chinese people and a lot of young men who do love peace just like you.

I think some friends sitting here must be interested in China's development and the so-called military expansion. I could tell you that please be rational and calm down with these issues. Yes, China's economy is developing fast and the increase of military expenditure is also an undeniable fact. But these issues deserve careful and deep analysis. If you visit Shanghai or Beijing, you must think that China has become a developed country. But if you continue your visit to the west of China, you will find that absolute most of the people there are still living in poverty, and China is still a developing country. About the military expenditure, most of the increased part of the expenditure has been used to improve the welfare of the military personnel. In this regard I am not going to do propaganda but just like to tell you a story about one of my friends who serves in the army so far. At the very beginning of joining in the army four years ago, that friend asked me to find some internal materials in my college to help him to pass the master entrance examination getting out of the army. Then I asked why you wanted to quit from the army? He told me at that time "I can't afford my daily life expense, particularly no money to chase

girlfriend." I immediately promised to help this poor guy. About one year later, I phoned him with some examination materials. He told me happily that "thank you very much, my buddy, my salary has been doubled and the welfare has been improved a lot as well, so please forget my request about the materials. I will stay in the army for the generous salary, I will give you a dinner some day." So please chew this story a little bit more, if you need, I even can ask this friend to talk to you by himself.

Now, China is engaging in peaceful development and building a harmonious society with the scientific concept of development. And China will stick to its independent foreign policy of peace and strive to maintain the peace and stability in the region and the world. I hope that people can settle all disputes and conflicts through peaceful way and the world also will become a harmonious world and most importantly, all of the peoples in this earth will really live in peace and harmony in the near future. In China's capital Beijing, the artery road is "Chang'an Boulevard" which means "a street of long-lasting peace"; the grandest gate is "Tian'an men" which means "a gate of heavenly peace". Chinese people long for and love peace since ancient times. I am convinced that all people in the world also love peace and long for prosperity including all of you. Therefore, from now on let us endeavor hand in hand for our future of peace and prosperity.

Trygve Berge International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War - Norway

60 years ago, the world was starting the reconstruction and reconciliation after years of devastating wars. Wars of atrocities and genocides the human kind had never before imagined!

With time, and drawn by efforts of cooperation and on goodness of humans, the world moved on. While remembering the horrors of the past, a common future was created. But amidst all the good and all the tremendous progress the world has seen over the last half century, some terrible ghosts from the past remain. Monsters created to annihilate all life, and with no other purpose than unimaginable destruction!

These monsters remain with us, and constitute an imminent threat, not only to all existing life on earth, but also to the future generations and the very existence of mankind!

These monsters must be destroyed! They must be dismantled and buried, never again to reveal themselves, as they did those devastating days in August 1945. We must fight it, from all directions, and with all means! On all levels and on multiple

tracks!

We must fight for the fulfillment of the disarmament obligations of the NPT, at the same time we must work for the implementation of the test-ban treaty, and all other initiatives leading towards the total ban on nuclear weapons, in a global Nuclear Convention.

Our own organisation, IPPNW Norway, has for years urged our government to maintain a comprehensive approach to this issue. With the recent impasse of the NPT negotiations, this is of increased importance. Our government has maintained their traditional stand that nuclear disarmament should be fought along the NPT track, and is reluctant to support other ideas, such as the initiative for a global convention to abolish nuclear weapons. We will continue our efforts to convince our government that the nuclear convention can be seen as a supplement to the NPT, not as an isolated alternative.

We must also work on regional levels, striving for Nuclear Weapons Free Zones, which will also bring us forward on the way to our common target. South America, Africa and others have shown us how it can be done. It is time to put in place such a zone in Europe, East Asia and the Middle East as well. To achieve this, we need to work together, but a special responsibility lies with the countries of these regions.

In our own country of Norway, we must work towards this goal, as part of a joint European initiative, the wish of the people can and will be fulfilled! We must urge our governments to work towards this and from a Norwegian standpoint we will also push our government to work towards a nuclear weapon free zone within the Nordic Countries, which would be a big step in the right direction.

We will also continue our efforts to encourage the Norwegian government to actively promote denuclearization within NATO. During the Cold War, Norway was the only NATO country bordering Russia, and Norway has ever since the establishment of NATO in 1949 refused to allow NATO bases and nuclear weapons on Norwegian soil. But Norway is nevertheless part of an alliance that supports first strike use of nuclear weapons. NATO is a democratic organisation. What would happen if the majority of the member states went against the three nuclear weapon states of the alliance, and urged for a non-nuclear NATO policy and a nuclear weapon free Europe?

On a local level, we will also concentrate our efforts to make all the Norwegian mayors join in the initiative of the Mayors for Peace, declaring the municipalities as nuclear weapons free, and by doing this, putting pressure on the government from below. Half of the Mayors of Norway have already joined, but we still have work to do!

Nuclear Weapons will one day disappear from

the earth. This, we consider a question of time. What we must make sure, is that this happens by means of dismantlement, not by total annihilation.

And when that day comes, it is the people of the world who will be given the credit!

We have come a long way, but we still have work to do!

Let's do it together! Gambarimashô!

Kim Yong Jin **Conscientious Objector/ Forward** **Republic of Korea**

My name is Kim Yong Jin from South Korea. My country has a conscription system. When male citizens reach a certain age, they have to serve in the army. South Korean conscientious objectors are those who, based on their beliefs, refuse to fulfill their military obligations to be involved directly or indirectly in war or other uses of force.

Due to the lack of legal exemptions in South Korea's current legal system, those who refuse their military obligations based on their conscience are indicted on the charge of disobeying military orders and are sentenced to imprisonment. Since I refused to fulfill my military obligations based on my beliefs in socialism and peace, I was kept in custody for two months before being put in a jail for fifteen months. I was released on 30 April. Currently, about 900 conscientious objectors are imprisoned and the number is expected to increase as long as the government does not recognize citizens' rights to refuse military obligations in conformity with their conscience.

Rejection of military obligations is a personal stance for peace as well as having a significant meaning for the entire progressive movement. It is also an act of resistance to militarism. By choosing not to bear arms, conscientious objectors directly practice their opposition to war. Governments in the military confrontation between North and South Korea have not only used their citizens as military pawns but have also wasted an enormous amount of resources for military purposes, thus increasing tension on the Korean Peninsula while decreasing attention to social issues. This militarism has negatively affected not only the Korean Peninsula but other parts of East Asia as the Korean conflict is connected to the balance of power among the United States, Russia, Japan, and China. The refusal of conscientious objectors to bear guns is an act of personal and creative resistance for peace in response to global conditions.

Their refusal is also a resistance to nationalism. A community will become a genuine community only when it provides its members with an environment in which they can make full use of

their abilities for everyone. A community based on nationalism, however, reduces its citizens to simple tools for the benefit only of a few, disregarding individual human rights. It is an undeniable fact that the governments of all nations in the world more or less have forced their citizens to endure nationalist policies. North and South Korea, using the justification of military tension, have promoted nationalism for the last sixty years. The conscription system is the most direct tool and symbol of nationalism. Thus, rejection of military obligations is also resistance to nationalism.

I would like to share with you the goal that I am pursuing. Japan's current rightist leanings arouse concern among conscientious Japanese citizens. They also cause wariness among citizens in North Korea, in South Korea, in China, and in other neighboring countries that used to be Japanese colonies. The rightist leanings in Japan

are having a negative impact on peace in Asia as well as in the world. Therefore, I believe that the significance of refusing military obligations and of defending Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution is not different. The meaning of the movements against the nationalistic Hinomaru flag and the nationalistic Kimigayo anthem is the same as well. In South Korea, there is opposition to our pledge of allegiance to our flag, which I believe is similar to the opposition to the Hinomaru flag and to the Kimigayo anthem. Progressive forces must carry out struggles against nationalistic symbols. Struggles in Korea and in Japan have the same purposes and goals. We, therefore, must develop international solidarity for peace. Let us jointly conduct actions against militarism and against nationalism as well as for peace. I hope that this rally will be an important opportunity for us to understand each other and to connect our movements. Let us work together.

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Appeal from the International Youth Rally: "Let Us Get Rid of Nuclear Weapons 2007" in Hiroshima & Nagasaki

Sixty-two years after the first nuclear bombings, a total of 2,200 young people from across Japan and around the world gathered in Hiroshima and Nagasaki for the "International Youth Rally: Let Us Get Rid of Nuclear Weapons 2007".

Since the Second International Youth Rally on the theme of "inheritance" held last year, activities to make known the reality of the damage from the A-Bombs and to demand the abolition of nuclear weapons have been spreading world-wide.

In France, the campaign to send an open letter of inquiry on nuclear disarmament issues to presidential candidates is in progress, providing the public with the information on these candidates' replies. Already 20,000 people have sent their responses to the survey on nuclear weapons conducted by the movement. The campaigners continue their efforts to achieve the responses from 100,000 people.

In the Republic of Korea, the "East Asian Conference Against War, Nuclear Proliferation" was held last May. This was a historic opportunity for the Japanese and Korean victims of A-bombs, NGOs, and citizens to get together and exchange their views and lessons learned in their joint efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

In Japan, while staying under the U.S. "nuclear umbrella", the government tries to revise Article 9, in order to turn Japan into a nation which can wage wars. A cabinet member of the government faced strong criticism from the public, especially the Hibakusha, and was driven into resignation after he said, "the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki could not be helped." This clearly showed the power of Hibakusha and the anti-nuclear movement to resist injustice and deception.

Even 62 years after the bombings, Hibakusha continue to suffer from indelible damage in their minds, and bodies. Yet they tell us their experiences out of their earnest desire: "Hiroshima and Nagasaki should never be inflicted on anyone again."

Touched by the life of those Hibakusha, the Preparatory Committee of the Youth Rally 2007 earlier this year launched a "210 Thousand Paper-Cranes Project". Through this project to ask people to fold a total of 210,000 paper cranes, representing the number of deaths in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, new dialogues and

joint activities among different generations and across regions have been developing.

Today, we hereby renew our commitment to achieve a nuclear weapon-free, peaceful and just world.

For achieving the swift abolition of nuclear weapons, let each of us consider our own way of addressing the inheritance from the Hibakusha and informing others, and march forward. We look forward to the sharing of even more fruitful achievements in the rallies next year in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

August 7, 2007

International Youth Rally "Let Us Get Rid of Nuclear Weapons 2007"

